

The 2nd Generation: Tom Schaedler, Sr.

Roughly 22 years after opening for business, Schaedler Bros. welcomed the 2nd Generation to the company. In 1946, Tom Schaedler, Sr. joined the team.

After just a few years, Tom was made president and became the architect of several important changes to the company. Understanding the need for strong, local supply, Tom planned to transition Schaedler Bros. to a larger facility. After briefly considering the old Coca-Cola bottling plant on 19th Street, he eventually moved the company from Briggs Street to 13th Street.

Tom was a visionary. He saw a strong future and wanted to be ready to serve customers with an exceptional experience. He signed on with Allen-Bradley in 1955 and began looking at new products and services.

But Tom knew that selling wasn't just about having products the customers wanted. Tom built relationships. He personally knew the owners of all the big electrical companies and considered them friends. Business usually turned into pleasure, whether it was one of SBI's huge, 400-person Christmas parties, or settling an invoice with customer. It's said that each month Sam Reiter of Reiter Electric would stop in to drop a check for his month bill. After Tom gave him a check back for his cash discount, the two would socialize over a drink.

As important as products and customers were to Tom, employees were the most important of all. Whether treating the ladies to a play at Allenberry Playhouse, taking the guys to a ball game or holding picnics and Christmas parties for all, he knew that Schaedler Bros. was only as strong as the team it employed. Even during tough times, Tom would find projects to keep the staff busy so he wouldn't have to lay them off. He knew that each of them had families to support and that losing his people was losing a part of his own family. To show them how valuable they were to the him and to the success of the company, in 1966 Tom started our Profit-Sharing Plan. He believed that Social Security wouldn't be enough to sustain someone in retirement and wanted to share profits so that they could invest and prepare for their later life.

He'd prepared his company for the next step...whatever that was to be. He never wanted to build an empire, he simply wanted to make a living and provide for his staff and their families. He considered selling the company as he readied for his own retirement.

But in 1972, his mind was changed when youngest son, Jim, officially joined the business. Now a 3rd Generation company, Schaedler Brothers was positioned for the next adventure.

Despite not being top dog at the company anymore, Tom continued to "go to work" in the early 90s, enjoying opening mail and talking with employees and customers.

In the mid-1990s, Alzheimer's reared its ugly head, but Tom's attitude remained positive. Tom passed away in 2002 at the age of 84.

